



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

CARDINAL GIBBONS: CITIZEN

BY ALLEN SINCLAIR WILL

Author of the Life of Cardinal Gibbons

THE judgment passed by his fellow countrymen upon the citizenship of Cardinal Gibbons was crystallized in the public comments at the time of his death, but these comments were only a reinforced expression of a national verdict that had been firmly fixed for a third of a century.

Such doubts of Cardinal Gibbons's civic rating in the nation as had been engendered by prejudice concerning religion had long been negligible in extent. While Cardinal O'Connell eulogized him at his death as "America's first and finest citizen," Bishop Murray, of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Maryland, which is nearly coextensive with the Catholic archdiocese of Baltimore, went even further by expressing the conviction that "certainly no contemporary has contributed quite so much to the history of American life in all its departments" as this "true patriot." Rabbi Schulman extolled his virtues and eminent services as having "endeared him to the American heart." In the view of President Harding, who as a United States Senator had known the Cardinal personally, "he was the very finest type of citizen and churchman."

Clearly it was the quality of Cardinal Gibbons's citizenship rather than any direct result in legislation that he has left as a national heritage. Indeed, his participation in public affairs might have been wholly lacking in specific accomplishment without affecting either the general nature of the public reaction to it or the extent of that reaction. The mind of the nation was less disposed to dwell upon what he did in his capacity as a churchman, or outside that capacity, than upon the fact that he did not mingle the two relations, but rendered "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." It was not so much concerned because he was on the popular side

of any question (for instance, in regard to his warnings against Socialism and Bolshevism) or the losing side (as in his opposition to the woman suffrage and prohibition amendments) as with the consideration that he had the courage to declare his views freely and without rancor whenever he saw the necessity of doing so. It came to be unquestioned that partisanship did not enter at all into his conduct as a citizen, and that expediency could neither subdue nor intensify the voice of the preacher who sought to sway only by the force of truth and reason.

The public seemed always ready to turn from the highly seasoned diet of political controversy with which it was regaled by party aspirants or men in public office to the solid and substantial mental food which the patriot-prelate placed before it. The general sanity of his political and social thinking caused the deepest part of the impression. In a country where public opinion is, to a great extent, the real ruler, that sanity was welcomed like a draught from a pure spring upon the lips of a thirsty traveler. The whole nation seemed to accept him as its favorite adviser.

What, then, was the foundation upon which the Cardinal built his own type of citizenship that appeared to be so distinctive? Was there anything in it unattainable by the ordinary man who may wish to emulate him in this respect? Was it in part due to his position in life, to superior mental gifts, or in any other way to exceptional opportunities? On the other hand, did he set an example which, in its essentials, may be followed by all, and which, therefore, all may find profit in analyzing and applying in their own lives? Upon the answers to these questions depends the permanence of the civic legacy he has left.

In the first place, it may be observed that the citizenship of Cardinal Gibbons was a by-product, just as citizenship ought to be and must be in the case of the great majority. He held no position except that of an Archbishop and Cardinal, with related Church functions, and might have avoided all unofficial civic responsibility—the only kind which it was possible for him to exercise—without his course being considered in the least degree unusual. There was easily open to him a viewpoint like that of the busy merchant, the highly engrossed lawyer, or the over-

worked artisan who "has no time" for participation in public affairs beyond, perhaps, casting an occasional vote. He might have assumed the aloofness of some moralists who do not wish to "soil their hands" with such things. Besides, there was the ever present custom of many churchmen of all creeds, who avoid the civic relation either because they feel that it is not a part of their spiritual mission or that their motives may be misunderstood.

No such consideration entered the mind of Cardinal Gibbons. He could not be in the world and not of it, in the best sense. In the institutions of his country he saw not merely a material structure providing for material needs. To him the American system was a manifestation of the working of Divine Providence for the welfare of men. The nation of which he was a member was in his view a providential nation, raised to diffuse the blessings of liberty not only for itself, but as an example to all the world. That any effort by him should be spared to keep it true to the exalted mission which he believed it to possess would have appeared to him unthinkable.

Thus when other churchmen, Catholic or non-Catholic, sometimes refused to take part in public movements in his own community of Baltimore, the Cardinal lent a ready ear to pleas for his potent coöperation in them. He came to be the greatest civic asset that the city possessed. Conspicuously loyal as he was to his city and his State, however, he was at heart an American nationalist, and was always reaching out to that view which would embrace all who dwelt under the flag.

A characteristic of his citizenship, which had its root in his nationalism, was that, as his closest associates have abundantly borne witness, he seemed incapable of thinking in terms of class. In his view the very essence of the republic was cheerful acquiescence in the majority verdict for the common good, and the casting of the ballot on the broad consideration of the general well-being rather than the special interest of the individual. His writings and other public expressions show that he abhorred the thought of groups of foreign-born citizens clinging together on the basis of previous nationality. Many years back, when the drift of world opinion was strongly set against the labor unions, he was

the foremost champion in the Catholic Church of their essential rights, before the Encyclical on Labor of Leo XIII gave permanent recognition to those rights. But the labor vote was no less repugnant to him than any other vote that fell short of the conception that the highest good of all was the best protection of the individual.

For his Church he asked no favors, being content with the equal rights respecting religion guaranteed to all under the Constitution which, he was always ready to maintain, amounted in reality to powerful protection. He was uttering one of the supreme tenets of his life when he declared only a short time before his death that religious intolerance was the greatest of all dangers in this country, where, if it were allowed to fester, it would poison the whole body politic. In his opinion, "union of Church and State often meant interference, and American liberty meant the opportunity to win men to the faith free from the vexation of human complications."

The only occasion, as far as I can recall, when he ever intervened in a public question in which the interests of the Catholic Church were involved was in regard to the settlement of the friar lands question in the Philippines, upon which the pacification of the Islands depended after the Spanish War. He was extremely reluctant to take any steps in that matter, and did not do so until the Government at Washington seemed to have used its last resource in unsuccessful efforts to bring about a solution. Then, without expressing any view or wish of his own, he obtained a statement of the Government's own terms, and by means of his powerful help, the settlement was reached on precisely that basis. For this, as well as other services which did not concern the Church, he received the gratitude of the White House.

Another example which the Cardinal set was the value which he placed upon the franchise of the individual and the regularity with which he exercised it. He considered that one of his main duties in each year was to cast his ballot, and only physical inability could prevent him from doing so. Failing to register on the poll-books was a dereliction of which he seemed to be incapable.

He fortified himself for the duties of citizenship by thorough study of our Constitution and history. Early in life he took

pains to familiarize himself with the origin and nature of American institutions, and throughout his long career he continued to add to his store of knowledge on those subjects. American history was his favorite secular reading and Washington was his favorite secular character, with Franklin, perhaps, next in his estimation. He loved to dwell upon the links between those two men and John Carroll, first Archbishop of Baltimore, who organized the Catholic Church in the new Republic in harmony with American institutions and, at an earlier stage, had accompanied Franklin to Canada on the mission of attempting to win the people of that region to the cause of the thirteen colonies in the Revolution. Even in his last illness the Cardinal, while confined to his bed, had von Holst's bulky history of our country read to him.

Extreme methods in the prohibition crusade were repellent to him, for, while he had been a worker for temperance from his youth up, he saw a general danger to national standards in putting unenforceable laws on the statute books. He was never disposed to close his eyes to "our shortcomings as a nation," as he said in Rome in a speech in which he gave one of the best defenses of American institutions that he ever uttered.

Next to a possible rise of religious intolerance, Cardinal Gibbons seemed to fear most the introduction of harmful foreign influences in America through the wave of immigration. In the great battle against "Cahenslyism" which he led in the last decade of the century just passed he obtained ecclesiastical decisions which, in effect, placed the Catholic Church in the position of an active force for the Americanization of foreigners who come here. This victory, perhaps, gave him greater satisfaction than any other which he obtained in his life of intensity and struggle. In a dramatic sermon which he preached in Milwaukee at the climax of the agitation on this question, he spoke words which remain as a monument of his aspirations. "God and our country! this be our watchword," he exclaimed, "next to love of God, should be love of country. . . . It matters not whether this is the land of our birth or our adoption. It is the land of our destiny."

ALLEN SINCLAIR WILL.